(c) the steps being taken to protect the crops during these severe weather conditions in the country;

(d) whether any relief programme is being considered by Government to compensate the losses to the affected farmers due to these weather calamities; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Due to severe cold condition prevailing in the country, standing rabi crops have been damaged in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The Punjab State held reported severe loss to the Horticultural Crops and nominal loss to the Agriculture. The State of Haryana has reported loss to crop of mustard to the extent of 223000 tonnes with value of Rs. 401.56 crores, gram at 600 tonnes with a value of Rs. 0.98 crores. The State of Jammu and Kashmir reported the loss to the extent of Rs. 45.10 crore to the crops of wheat, oilseed vegetables, potatoes and fodder crops. The Rajasthan State has reported loss to the extent of 5.85 lakh ha. to mustard and Tara Mira crops. The Madhya Pradesh State reported the damage to the crop of gram, lentil and Arhar to the extent of 015 lakh ha. and the State of Uttar Pradesh has reported the damage to the tune of 11% in mustard, 5% in wheat, 7% in barley and 22% in gram/peas/lentil crops in the districts of Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar.

(c) The farmers have been advised to provide light irrigation as per need, prone immediately damaged tips of branches or shoot, burn leave/waste material in the orchard to create smock and managing the damaged crops through pruning of dead material and application of extra doses of fertilizer through fliar sprays.

(d) and (e) Cold wave frost is not covered under the guidelines of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) and National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF). However, the farmers are entitled for compensation under the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) implemented through the State Governments.

Crises of food security

†803. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that crisis of food security has further increased following shrinking of crop-sowing 'raqba' in current Rabi season;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that private companies have started purchasing foodgrains at a price higher than MSP directly from farmers;

(d) if so, the quantity and price of foodgrains brought so far by these companies; and

(e) the special efforts being made by Government to expand 'raqba' of cultivable land and to increase productivity of the crop under food security mission which would do away the increasing shortage of foodgrains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) to (d) The likely production of foodgrains during 2007-08 is estimated at 219.32 million tones (IInd Advance Estimate 2007-08) which is the highest ever production of foodgrains in the country. The harvesting of wheat which is main foodgrain

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

crop during Rabi season is yet to commence and it is too early to assess the procurement and its price.

(e) The National Food Security Mission has been launched in 17 States of the country for enhancing production of rice, wheat and pulses by 10, 8 and 2 million tonnes, respectively by 2011-12. About 4.047 million ha. additional area is to be brought under pulses for increasing production.

Lesser price of jute in Assam

804. KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of jute in Assam become lower;

(b) the steps proposed to give relief to the poor farmers, who are engaged in jute products in Assam; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to persuade to Ministries/Departments/Corporation to purchase jute to prevent the suffering of the jute growers in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Month-end wholesale price of Tossa Desi-5 variety of jute at Nagaon market in Assam which was Rs. 1800/- per quintal in May, 2006, declined in the subsequent months of the year 2006. However, in 2007, the prices of this variety in Assam got stabilized at a lower level ranging from Rs. 1200-Rs.1100 per quintal.

(b) and (c) Government fixes the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for TD-Grade 5 of Raw Jute (ex-Assam) annually on the basis of recommendation of the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP) to ensure that jute farmers in the country get remunerative prices for their produce. Such MSP for TD-Grade 5 of Raw Jute (ex-Assam) for 2008-09 has been fixed at Rs. 1250/- per quintal, which is higher than that for the previous year by Rs. 195/- per quintal. The Ministry of Textiles further fixes that MSP for other varieties of raw jute.

To protect the interest of jute growers in the country, the Jute Corporation of India Limited (JCI) procures raw jute at the fixed MSP in the event of its market prices falling below MSP. The JCI also undertaken commercial purchases of jute from the markets, as and when required. The JCI purchased 2.11 lakh quintals of Raw Jute in 2006-07 and 1.60 lakh quintals in 2007-08 in Assam.

Demand to ban cow-slaughters

†805. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the heads of the National Muslim Forum, the Sikh Sant including the Hindu Society have demanded for putting a ban on the cow-slughters through the Central law in the conference on cow-slaughter held on the 7th November, 2007 in Delhi;

(b) whether they have demanded for a separate Ministry for promotion and care of cow, etc.;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.